



APM Project Management Awards

# WINNER'S

## CASE STUDY



Category

**Project Professional of the Year 2014**

Winner

**Steve Walters, Magnox Ltd**

Sponsor



### Overview

Magnox manages and operates 10 civil nuclear sites across England, Scotland and Wales on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). Once a nuclear site completes electricity generation the 'business as usual' operational work for employees comes to an end.

As well as the change of comfort zone for a site engineer demolishing a turbine hall having meticulously maintained it for its 40 year operational life, or the control room operator identifying plant to be taken out of service having taken pride of ensuring it was always in service.

Multiply that by 3,000 employees and 1,500 supporting contractors and add in a hard and fast target set by the

client to embed a project delivery-focused organisation against a traditional perception by the project management community that nuclear projects are complex, bureaucratic and expensive.

Steve Walters has played a leading role in the revolution of Magnox to overcome an entrenched 40-year operator mindset to become that project management-focused organisation. Without compromise to safety and environmental responsibility he has established a new benchmark for getting results across the global nuclear industry which has in turn delivered taxpayer savings in excess of £17.5 million in only four years.

“It is a privilege to work with a leader that inspires and delivers consistent results across a multitude of complex projects. Compelling vision, determination, foresight and ability to respond are fundamental to successful project management to which this is the recipe for Steve's success.”

**Brad Bowman,**

Project Manager, Pond Decommissioning Team,  
Bradwell site.



## Objectives

The legacy culture of the nuclear industry is to design, build and commission under a comfort blanket that no project cost would out balance the potential loss of operational income. Over-specification was common as a result of engineering bespoke solutions to guarantee no compromise to nuclear safety.

As Director of Decommissioning, Steve's focus was the identification and development of opportunities for significant baseline improvements across Magnox.

Through his specific leadership, projects were grouped into programmes to deliver consistent sets of benefits. To do this, Steve led from the front and in 2010 took the position of Programme Director – Ponds, accountable for the flagship programme with the highest radiological hazard projects within Magnox.

## Challenges

Decommissioning is not simply commissioning in reverse. Emptying, decontaminating and removing pond structures previously used to store and cool spent nuclear fuel must be done with no compromise to people and the environment. Ponds are the second highest radiological hazard on a Magnox site after the spent fuel itself.

The challenges are to dismantle the plant and structures of the ponds after decades of nuclear operation, to contain contaminants and to keep radiological dose rates for operatives as low as reasonably practical

It is also imperative to overcome the cultural adversity of an operational mindset so that a workforce of more than 1,000 staff and contractors can work together to overcome unique challenges and with a common set of goals – to exceed client expectations, to deliver taxpayer value, to complete their work 12 years ahead of programme and at significantly lower costs than planned

## Resources

A change in tact and skill sets was required for the project delivery phase, so once a strategic direction was agreed for the Ponds Programme, Steve turned his focus to developing capability.

He assembled a team with the specialised knowledge, a solution-focused mentality and the skill sets needed to support the growth and integration of a programme approach.

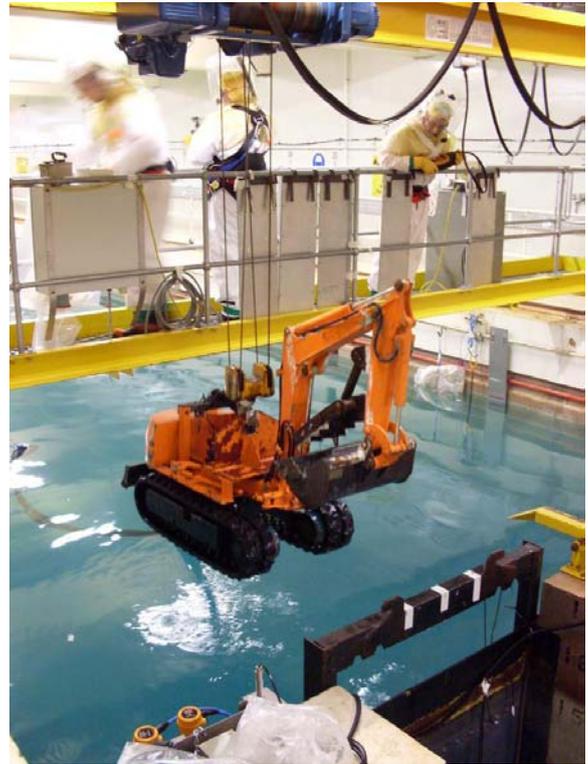
One of his biggest wins was to break the design and build tradition, opting instead for a 'delivery first' culture for solving problems in the field. This was possible only because he selected strong players with the right balance of attitude, skill and experience.

## Innovation

Taking lessons from across the global nuclear industry was key to success but there previously existed no benchmark or comparable data for delivering pond decommissioning. Steve's strategic vision and approach has underpinned the prudent planning and formulation of measurable and comprehensive programme objectives.

The Magnox Pond Programme has adopted a range of technical developments from conventional sources and has introduced them as 'first of a kind' innovations for the nuclear industry. However, by far the greatest accomplishment is the formation of a highly capable, integrated and solution driven team.

Metrics from these approaches are being used to inform future baselines, which has improved the overall quality, class of estimate and confidence in programme delivery.



## Results

Through benchmarking and a strong dedication to succeed, Steve has set a new standard for nuclear decommissioning in a global context. Founded upon his success, he was selected to support the UK government to transfer lessons to Japan following the Fukushima Daiichi disaster and has supported the International Atomic Energy Agency to standardise decommissioning approaches. In addition, Steve is currently working with Sellafield to support a number of their decommissioning projects,

His commitment over the past 11 years has delivered significant baseline improvements in how Magnox sites are decommissioned, benefitting the client and improving the overall outcome for the regulators, employees and taxpayers.





**The APM Project Management Awards** have been celebrating project management excellence since 1993 and the broad range of categories is designed to make entry possible for projects and companies of all sizes and complexity.

The awards reflect the invaluable contribution project managers make in all sectors of society and the event provides an opportunity for industry professionals to meet with colleagues and entertain guests as well as celebrate at one of the year's most exciting events.

Highly regarded in the project management industry, the awards reflect the dedication and talent that helps to shape the project management community and the world around us. The finalists, winners and sponsors of the awards attract national publicity for their achievement and involvement. Winning an award provides invaluable recognition and kudos to the careers of winners.

For more details on the awards and how to enter or attend, visit [apm.org.uk/awards](http://apm.org.uk/awards) or email [awards@apm.org.uk](mailto:awards@apm.org.uk)

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